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SUBJECT: AFRICA COMMAND DCMA COORDINATES WITH PORTUGUESE CIVIL AUTHORITIES

REF: LISBON 1726

Classified By: DEPUTY POL/ECON COUNSELOR TROY FITRELL FOR REASONS 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (U) Summary: Africa Command DCMA Amb. Yates conducted meetings with civilian interlocutors in Lisbon November 4 to develop potential partnerships, particularly in Lusophone Africa. Representatives from the Ministries of Interior and Justice lauded existing trilateral cooperation with the US in Lusophone Africa and suggested regular meetings with the Africa Command to coordinate plans and develop additional cooperative efforts. The MOJ specifically asked for assistance to follow up with the FBI regarding the acquisition of the FBI's DNA information-sharing database. MFA interlocutors said Portugal had pressed EU Foreign Ministers to cite cooperation in Africa in their letter to the new US President regarding transatlantic cooperation. The Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries agreed to explore the idea of inviting Africa Command as an observer to command exercises and field exercises held in alternate years and to send CPLP representatives to US-led exercises. End summary.

¶2. (U) US Africa Command Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities (DCMA) Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates met with Lisbon-based civilian interlocutors November 4 at the Portuguese Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Justice, as well as with the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) Secretariat and the Ambassadors of CPLP's African members. The DCMA's visit was designed both to sensitize her interlocutors to the realities of the new command and to establish groundwork for future partnerships, particularly in Lusophone Africa. Meetings with Defense interlocutors will be reported separately.

¶3. (C) Minister of Interior Rui Pereira assembled his senior team, including police, national guard, civil protection, and the Lusophone security cooperation secretariat. Pereira said the EU's Justice and Home Affairs meeting on Guinea-Bissau had specifically cited the need to cooperate with the US on the development of institutions in that country. Pereira and his staff praised an exceptional trilateral cooperation program with the U.S. that concluded three days earlier in Mozambique. The Department's INL Bureau funded training of Mozambique's border guards, using Portuguese Ministry of Interior trainers. Pereira and his staff, initially unclear about how Africa Command could work with civilian law enforcement agencies, were pleased to hear that similar future trilateral programs were possible with Africa Command funding. Interior's international efforts are focused on immigration/border control, public security, and disaster relief. Pereira suggested that Africa Command and Portugal's

civilian security ministries (Interior and Justice) meet regularly to coordinate plans and develop cooperation programs.

¶4. (C) Ministry of Justice (MOJ) officials provided briefings on counternarcotics and counterterrorism efforts in West Africa, particularly in Guinea-Bissau. Deputy Minister of Justice Jose Conde Rodrigues stressed the Guinea-Bissau action plan in great detail, advocating institutional development there. He expressed specific gratitude to Africa Command for already having funded a trilateral program in which the command paid for MOJ prosecutors and investigators to train their counterparts in Cape Verde, a primary transshipment point for South American narcotics en route to Europe. MOJ officials also wish to acquire the FBI's DNA information-sharing database and asked the Embassy for follow-up with the FBI. The MOJ is also helping establish forensic science services in Angola and Cape Verde, for which this database would also be useful.

¶5. (C) MFA Political Director Nuno Brito related that EU Foreign Ministers had the previous day approved a letter to the new US President regarding transatlantic cooperation. Brito said Portugal pushed to have the letter specifically mention cooperation in Africa. He made a particularly strong statement that Guinea-Bissau should be a priority for anyone interested in African security issues. He referred to efforts by Portugal, the EU, and UNODC to help shore up the government, lest Guinea-Bissau become entirely controlled by narcotraffickers. Brito suggested that elections in Guinea-Bissau this month will provide an indicator of the types of assistance that will be most effective there. MFA

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interlocutors appreciated the briefing on the unique structure of Africa Command, noting that it was relevant to the current threats of organized crime, counternarcotics, migration, and pandemics. Brito said regularized staff talks between Africa Command and Portuguese institutions could be discussed under the Bilateral Commission structures and added that the NATO Joint Command based in Lisbon had great potential for the Africa Command's purposes.

¶6. (C) The CPLP Secretariat staff, led by Secretary General Helder Vaz Lopes, provided briefings on defense cooperation within the Lusophone community, including the proposed establishment of "centers of excellence" focused on specific military tasks such as peacekeeping operations. The CPLP also referred to command exercises and field exercises in alternate years and agreed to explore the idea of inviting Africa Command observers. Amb. Yates offered CPLP the opportunity to send observers to the Flintlock exercise in Rota, Spain this month. CPLP ambassadors representing African states provided extensive detail in advance of the DCMA's upcoming visits to their countries.

Comment

¶7. (C) This visit went a long way to clarify understanding of Africa Command's structure and mission. That alone would have made the visit worthwhile, but the call from the Ministries of Justice and Interior to establish formal contacts with Africa Command to coordinate plans and deepen the already successful trilateral cooperation was extremely welcome. Although the Ministry of Defense has not found a way to respond to proposals for cooperative action in a timely manner, Justice and Interior have been far more proactive. Each of these ministries, however, serve political masters. Portuguese elections in Autumn 2009 will offer insight into the Portuguese government's desire to cooperate with the US. The belief, expressed by all of our Portuguese interlocutors, that Guinea-Bissau should be a priority for us was telling. We took this message on board, that US national interests might be better served by direct engagement with Guinea-Bissau and this may be something we can address trilaterally with Portugal. We suggest that

addressees begin to consider how we can best address the security challenges in that troubled country.

¶8. (U) DCMA Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates cleared this cable.
STEPHENSON